DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 059 848 RE 004 025

AUTHOR McConnell, Jim; And Others
TITLE Effective Reading Instruction for Senior High School Special Education Students.
PUB DATE Oct 71
NOTE 4p.; Paper presented at the meeting of the Washington Organization for Reading Development, Walla Walla, Wash., Oct., 1971

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Academic Performance; *Behavior Change; *High School Students; *Phonics; Reading Improvement; Reading Instruction; *Reading Programs; Reading Speed; Senior High Schools; *Special Education

ABSTRACT

A phonetically based reading program was designed for senior high school special education students utilizing the teaching techniques of behavior modification. Student success was the primary reinforcing agent. Students began by reading orally sound symbols printed on cards. Each day the individual students' oral reading was timed. Throughout the program an objective was to maintain a low error rate, yet to progress as rapidly as the students could respond correctly. When all of the regular spellings of the long vowels had been mastered and the individual student's rate was maintained at 80 to 100 sounds-per-minute, he was moved into reading word cards. The words were regular in pronunciation, usually emphasizing a particular vowel sound. Once the student had maintained a rate of 110 to 120 words-per-minute, he was moved into reading sentences from a graded reading series, and then advanced to higher readers when his oral rate improved. Accelerated student performance was evident. Students gained reading competence, self-confidence, and interest in reading, and showed better performance in all subject areas and social behavior in school. (AW)

ED 059848

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Effective Reading Instruction for Senior High School Special Education Students

by

Jim McConnell, M. Ed. Dale Lanegan, M.Ed. Hyrum Henderson, D. Ed.

Problem

The question of how to teach reading to senior high school special education students was a prime concern of the Ellensburg, Washington, high school special education program. Students were arriving at the high school with very minimal reading competence. At best, their performance was based on a hit or miss approach entirely without foundation in basic reading skills. Their resultant school performance was poor in any curricular area requiring reading.

From observation of their oral reading performance, it was evident that the students could not associate the proper sounds with appropriate letter symbols. They repeatedly guessed at words, saying what they thought the words looked like, and making shotgun guesses from context clues.

Procedure

The program was phonetically based, utilizing the teaching techniques of behavior modification. Student success very soon became the primary reinforcing agent, as the students realized success from the beginning.

To begin, the symbols representing the sounds of the English language were printed on 2" by 2" cards. A set of cards was prepared for each student. The cards were sorted into two stacks, one containing the sounds responded to correctly, the other containing the sounds responded to incorrectly. The sounds responded to correctly then formed the basis for beginning each individual student's program.

The students practiced reading orally the sounds from the cards responded to correctly. As an aid to practice, they read the sounds to one another and made

RE 004 025

up words, either real or nonsense. The important point being that they read to sounds correctly.

Once a day the students were timed on oral reading the sounds with which they were working. The cards were laid out in rows of from six to twelve. This was done randomly so that they did not learn to respond in a fixed order. The students read the sounds from left to right, from top to bottom, as they would read from a page in a book.

The exact amount of time required for each student to read all their sounds correctly was divided into the number of sounds read, and the rate per minute thus computed. The sounds taught were:

b c d f j g h l m n p qu r s t v w x

y- z -y a e i o u a e i o u ch sh th wh

ph oo ou ow oi oy ng ar er ir or ur

Throughout the program an objective was to maintain a low error rate, yet progress as rapidly as the students could respond correctly. The object being to keep each student progressing but not have them become discouraged by either a large number of errors or lack of progress.

When all of the regular spellings of the long vowels had been mastered and the individual student's rate was maintained at 80 to 100 sounds per minute, they were moved into reading word cards. The word cards were 4" by 5" cards with three to four letter words printed on them. These words were all regular in pronunciation, usually emphasizing a particular vowel sound. Students were given a different set of word cards each day with which to practice. The rating procedure was the same as with sound cards. Once the student had maintained a rate per minute of 110 to 120 word cards, he was moved into reading sentences from a graded reading series. The students oral reading rate was measured daily and as their rate reached 145 to 150 words they were moved to the next highest reader.

Results

Accelerated student performance was evident. Students were reading with increased competence and confidence. They learned to like reading, were taking books home, and regarded their daily reading instruction as the highlight of the day's instruction. Student performance in all subject areas including social behavior in school was also observed to be markedly improved.

SUBJECTS & AGES	BEGINNING READING LEVEL	ORAL W/ P/ M	ENDING READING LEVEL	ORAL W/ P/ M	TOTAL DAYS
1. (16)	First	25	Fourth	144	67
2. (17)	Fourth	60	Sixth	164	67
3. (18)	Fourth	70	Fifth	133	61
4. (16)	Sixth	75	Eighth	150	66
5. (16)	Fifth	45	Sixth	152	56
6. (16)	Fifth	75	Fifth	121	47
7. (16)	Fifth	85	Sixth	155	64
8. (16)	First	30	Fourth	120	55
9. (17)	Fourth	58	Sixth	166	57
10. (19)	Fourth	86	Fifth	147	30